

Big Thicket National Preserve

2009-10



Hunting Guide and Regulations

Before your first hunting trip to Big Thicket National Preserve, read these regulations. Study the map of the Preserve unit provided with this guide. Know the areas where you may hunt, and the areas where you may not hunt. State of Texas hunting season dates and regulations apply except where the following Big Thicket National Preserve Regulations are more restrictive (Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations).

Violations of State Law, Federal Law, and/or these regulations may result in a fine and/or the suspension or permanent loss of your hunting privileges. [36 CFR 1.6(h)]

Before you leave on your hunting trip, please inform a relative or friend of your intended point of entry, route of travel, and time of return. While hunting, dress appropriately for changing weather conditions and carry a flashlight, compass, first aid kit, maps, and water. Do not cross or park on private property without the consent of the landowner.

Hunting Regulations

1. The hunting season within the Big Thicket National Preserve extends from the opening date of the State of Texas fall archery-only season through the second Sunday in January. The extended hog-only season extends from the second Sunday in January until the last day of February. You may only hunt deer during the dates established by the State of Texas for the archery-only season and the deer gun season. **The spring hunting season is not observed in the Big Thicket National Preserve.** Big Thicket National Preserve observes all youth hunts that fall within the Preserve hunting season. Hunting at any other time or in any other manner than prescribed in this set of regulations is prohibited. [36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); 36 CFR 1.6(h); 36 CFR 7.85(a)(1)]
2. The following items must be in your possession while hunting in the Preserve: a current Big Thicket Hunting Permit; a State of Texas Hunting License; a Driver's License or an official personal identification certificate issued by a State department of public safety or similar State agency authorized to issue a driver's license; appropriate State and/or Federal stamps; and a Texas Hunter Safety Course Certification (if required). All hunters who are Age 17 and older and whose date of birth is on or after September 2, 1971, must have successfully completed the Texas Hunter Safety Course to hunt in the State of Texas. All hunters who are Age 12 through 16 must have successfully completed a hunter education course or be accompanied by a licensed hunter 17 years of age or older. All hunters who are under 12 years of age must be accompanied by a licensed permitted hunter 17 years of age or older. [36 CFR 7.85(c); 36 CFR 1.6(g)(1); 36 CFR 1.6(h)]
3. If a hunter will be 13 years of age by October 1, 2009, he/she must have a permit. Hunters who are 12 years of age or younger on this date are not required to have a permit, but they must be in the immediate control of a licensed permitted hunter Age 17 or older. [36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); 36 CFR 1.6(h)]
4. Each hunter must place the vehicle copy of his/her Big Thicket Hunting Permit on the dashboard of the vehicle from which he/she is hunting so that it can be read from outside the vehicle. Hunters who will be hunting in the Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit and Beaumont Unit hunting areas will be issued a special boat permit. This permit must be left in the boat from which they are hunting in a waterproof container attached to the vessel in plain view. [36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); 36 CFR 1.6(h)]
5. The Big Thicket Hunting Permit entitles you to take only white-tailed deer, squirrel, rabbit, feral hog, and waterfowl. [36 CFR 7.85(a)(2)(i); 36 CFR 7.85(a)(2)(ii)]

6. Only .17 and .22 caliber rim fire cartridge rifles (small game and hogs only), shotguns, muzzle-loading rifles, and bow and arrows are allowed. Big Thicket National Preserve adopts the State of Texas definition of "muzzleloader." [36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); 36 CFR 1.6(h); 36 CFR 7.85(d)(1)]
7. Slugs and buckshot may be possessed and/or used only during the deer gun season and the extended hog only season. [36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); 36 CFR 1.6(h)]
8. "No person, while hunting waterfowl anywhere in the State, may possess shotgun shells containing lead shot or loose lead shot for use in muzzleloaders. Approved shot, includes steel, including copper, nickel or zinc coated steel, bismuth-tin, tungsten-iron, tungsten-polymer (i.e., molysot), and any other non-toxic material approved by the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service." [36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); 36 CFR 1.6(h)] *(For all other game, the use of non-lead ammunition is encouraged in accordance with the National Park Service's efforts to reduce lead in the environment.)*
9. All handguns and center-fire rifles are prohibited. [36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); 36 CFR 1.6(h)] Concealed weapons are prohibited within the Preserve. [36 CFR 2.4(a)(1)]
10. Firearms must be unloaded (empty chamber and magazine) while crossing a "closed area" to reach a "hunting area." [36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); 36 CFR 1.6(h)] All weapons must be unloaded and unavailable for immediate use (rendered temporarily inoperable or packed, cased, or stored) while traveling in a vehicle or boat. [36 CFR 2.4(a)(3)]
11. The possession of a weapon is prohibited at night (from 1 hour after sunset to 1 hour before sunrise). This includes firearms in vehicles and boats. [36 CFR 7.85(d)(2)]
12. Crossbows are allowed in accordance with State of Texas Regulations. [36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); 36 CFR 1.6(h)]
13. Possession or consumption of an alcoholic beverage while in a unit open to hunting is prohibited. [36 CFR 2.35(a)(3)(i)]
14. Feeding or baiting of wildlife is prohibited. [36 CFR 2.1(a)(2); 36 CFR 2.2(a)(2)]
15. The use or possession of dogs for hunting is prohibited. [36 CFR 7.85(a)(3)]
16. Hunter Orange or International Orange must be worn and visible at all times while hunting in the Preserve. All hunters are required to wear a minimum of 400 square inches of Hunter Orange or International Orange while in designated hunting areas. The exception is waterfowl hunters when stationary in their waterfowl blinds. [36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); 36 CFR 1.6(h)]
17. You may hunt in the "hunting area" as shown on the enclosed unit map; however, you may not hunt within 500 feet of any designated trail, roadway, residence, or any navigable waterway (Neches River, Pine Island Bayou, and/or LNVA Canal). [36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); 36 CFR 1.6(h)]
18. Portable deer stands or blinds may be used, but they must be removed each day. [36 CFR 7.85(a)(4)] Construction or use of permanent stands, blinds, or other structures is prohibited. [36 CFR 7.85(a)(4); 36 CFR 5.7] Deer stands may not penetrate the bark of the tree. [36 CFR 2.1(a)(1)(ii)] You are required to label your portable deer stand with your name, address, and telephone number. The Preserve will confiscate unmarked and/or unattended deer stands. [36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); 36 CFR 1.6(h)]
19. Flagging, any marking device, or any other method of marking is prohibited. [36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); 36 CFR 1.6(h)]

20. Cutting and/or removal of vegetation for the creation of shooting lanes, hunting blinds, or for any other reason are prohibited. Machetes, axes, saws, or other types of cutting/chopping devices are prohibited. [36 CFR 2.1(a)(1)(ii); 36 CFR 1.6(g)(2); (36 CFR 1.6(h)]
21. Carry out all trash, including empty shotgun shells. Only field dressing of game is allowed within the Preserve. [36 CFR 2.14(a)(1)]
22. Human waste must be buried at least 100 feet from any road, trail, or creek. [36 CFR 2.14(a)(9)]
23. Camping is prohibited in hunting areas. [36 CFR 2.10(a)]
24. In established hunting areas, portable cooking stoves are permitted; ground fires are prohibited. [36 CFR 2.13(a)(1)]
25. Park vehicles along roads or in designated parking areas. Do not block gates or roads. [36 CFR 4.13(a)]
26. Off-road use of motorized vehicles, including all terrain vehicles (ATV's/UTM's) and motorcycles, is prohibited. [36 CFR 4.10(a)]

Your permit is valid from the opening date of the State of Texas fall archery only season until the end of the extended hog-hunting season, which is the last day of February. You may only hunt deer during the dates established by the State of Texas for the archery only season and the deer gun season. Big Thicket National Preserve observes all youth hunts that fall within the Preserve hunting season. To obtain a hunting permit for the following year, you must reapply during hunter registration. Your "Hunter's Report" card must be returned by April 7 or you will be disqualified from obtaining a permit next year.

If you have hunting questions, contact Preserve Headquarters at (409) 951-6831 or the Preserve Visitor Center at (409) 951-6701.

If you have questions about State of Texas Regulations, contact the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department at either 1(800) 792-1112, select menu option 5 then 1, or (409) 892-8666 (local law enforcement).

To report a crime or any emergency, contact our park watch number at 1 (800) Big Thicket or 1(800) 793-6566.

If your permit is either lost or stolen, please contact Preserve headquarters immediately.

The Big Sandy Horse Trail is closed from the opening day of the fall archery only season until last day of February.

Information on campgrounds located near Big Thicket National Preserve can be obtained by contacting the Preserve Visitor Center at (409) 951-6701.

Have a safe and pleasant hunting experience. Remember that the Preserve is not a hunting lease but is a National Preserve and, as such, is used by the general public during hunting season. Practice courtesy and safety at all times. This will provide a pleasant experience for you, other hunters, and the general public.

How does a Preserve differ from a National Park? By special permit, limited consumptive use of some resources (e.g. fish, wildlife, oil and gas) is authorized in a Preserve to protect both the cultural legacy of the region and the natural heritage of our nation.